

House Bill 98  
March 3, 2011  
Presented by Charles Van Genderen  
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Charles Van Genderen, State Parks Administrator of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here in support of House Bill 98.

HB98 is an agency bill. This bill would only apply to state park lands and no other lands in the Department. The Park Division is different than the Fish and Wildlife Division. We have fewer fiscal resources to draw from, and we have different priorities and challenges. This bill begins to help make that difference more clear and helps assure that money earned in state parks goes back into state parks.

Under current law, 87-1-601, funds from leases such as haying, grazing, rental of buildings or lands are deposited into a trust for the entire Department. The interest off of those monies is spent to improve Department lands and buildings.

The only way the Parks Division can access those monies currently is through competing for the funding against other fish and wildlife projects and that is a relatively rare occurrence. This bill would change that. This bill would remove state parks from the trust and allow the money to go into the parks earned revenue account. That account pays for day to day maintenance and operations.

Revenues of this sort amount to approximately \$11,000 per year. Additionally, we are working to improve the state park system and that includes disposing of park lands that have little significance. If any properties were sold as part of this effort, monies from those sales too should go back to State Parks.

HB98 is pretty straightforward and would allow monies earned from state park property to go into an existing state special revenue fund dedicated to improving state parks. We ask for your support.